

## ***Parking***

1. Each precinct needs to have at least one accessible parking space for people with disabilities.
2. The parking space should be located as near as possible to the entrance to the voting room.
3. Each parking space should be at least 16 feet wide.
4. Parking spaces should be on level ground, and on asphalt or pavement – free of loose gravel.
5. There should also be a level passenger drop off zone at least 4 feet wide by 20 feet long close to the path of travel.
6. If permanent accessible parking places are not provided in the polling area you will need to designate one with proper signage.

## ***Walkways or pathways to the building***

1. At least one accessible walkway is required – if the route is not obvious signs should be placed along the route to direct voters.
2. Walkways should not have steps or slopes with more than 1 inch rise in 12 feet.
3. The surface of walkways should be firm and stable – no loose gravel.
4. Walkways and sidewalks should be at least 3 feet wide to accommodate wheelchairs.

## ***Ramps and Elevators***

1. Ramps and elevators should be avoided if at all possible.
2. All ramps with a rise greater than 9 inches should have handrails.
3. If it is necessary to use an elevator in a polling place it must meet requirements spelled out in the *American National Standards Safety Code* (call the Election Division for more details).

## ***Other Features***

1. Each polling place must have one accessible entrance.
2. Entrances must have a clear width of at least 2 feet and 8 inches.
3. Doors should be operable without movement requiring a tight grasp.
4. No rigid or hard objects should project in the path of travel.

# **Polling Place Accessibility in Indiana**



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*This brochure is intended to provide general information about polling place accessibility in Indiana. Where your legal rights are involved, do not rely only on this brochure.*

In 1990, the 101<sup>st</sup> Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act requiring all states to comply. Therefore, in 1991 the Indiana General Assembly passed a law that required the Indiana Election Division to establish accessibility specifications regarding disabled and elderly voters. The purpose of the legislation was to make certain all buildings and facilities where voting and registration occur are accessible and useable by people with such disabilities as the inability to walk, persons that rely on wheelchairs, as well as being responsive to persons that are sight and hearing impaired, and any other physical or mental impairment that would prohibit them from registering to vote and voting.

### ***Selection of Polling Place***

County officials are responsible for the designation of polling places (IC 3-11-8-3.1). Most counties have established long term arrangements for the current facilities. County election officials have the responsibility for not only finding polling places, but ensuring polling places are accessible for persons with disabilities. It is important for election officials to routinely check the status of accessibility in each polling place. One simple exercise is to do a walk through of each of the polling places and grade it on how accessible it is. Things to consider are parking, accessible routes of travel to and from the polling place, as well as the polling place itself, elevators and ramps, and the accessibility of the voting equipment. A few helpful hints follow in this publication. Please contact the Election Division with any questions.

### ***Citizens with Disabilities at the Polls***

- 1. Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person who is disabled or elderly to get things done.**
- 2. Speak directly to the person who has a disability rather than to a companion who may be accompanying the voter.**
- 3. Speak calmly, slowly and directly to a person with a hearing problem. If full understanding is doubtful, write a note to the person.**
- 4. Before pushing someone in a wheelchair, ask if you may do so.**
- 5. Greet a person who is visually impaired by letting the person know who and where you are. Provide a guiding device such as a ruler or a card for signing forms. When offering walking assistance, allow the person to take your arm and tell the person if you are approaching steps or an incline.**
- 6. Be aware that dogs that assist people with disabilities must be admitted to all buildings.**
- 7. Be aware that federal law allows voters to be accompanied and receive assistance by another person in the voting booth.**
- 8. Voter turnout will increase if you inform people with disabilities that voting places are accessible.**
- 9. When choosing voting locations in your community, select buildings that are more accessible, i.e., schools, libraries, community centers, firehouses, park buildings, or court houses. If a polling place is not accessible, it should be moved to a place that is accessible.**
- 10. No one may be denied the right to vote because of any mental or physical limitation or disability.**